RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 29th April, 1992/ 9th Vaisakha, 1914 (Saka).

The House met at eleven of the Clock, **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों के मूल्यों में वृद्धि

*41 श्री राम जेठमलानी :

सरदार जगजीत सिंह अरोड़ा †: क्या पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि पेट्रोल तथा अन्य पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों के मूल्यों में सरकार द्वारा विगत अनेक वर्षों के दौरान कई बार वृद्धि की गई है जिससे कि उनकी खपत को कम किया जा सके;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि ऐसे प्रयासों के बावजूद उन उत्पादों की देश में होने वाली खपत में 6 से 7 प्रतिशत वार्षिक वृद्धि हुई है;

(ग) क्या यह भी सच है कि सरकार द्वारा इन उत्पादों के मूल्यों में निरंतर वृद्धि किये जाने के कारण हमारे देश में पेट्रोल की कीमतें यूनाइटेड किंगडम, जर्मनी, जापान, आस्ट्रेलिया, फ्रांस, न्यूजीलैंड आदि जैसे अन्य देशों की तुलना में काफी अधिक हो गई है जिसके परिणामस्वरूप देश में उपभोक्ता वस्तुओं के मूल्यों में निरंतर वृद्धि हो रही है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो क्या सरकार पेट्रोल तथा पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों की मूल्य निर्धारण नीति पर पुनर्विचार करने का विचार रखती है ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) and (b) The prices of petroleum products have been revised keeping in view the costs, growth in demand and socio-economic factors. The annual increase in the consumption of petroleum products during the last 10 years has varied between 1.7% and 8.2%.

(c) The prices of petrol in some other countries as per available information do not indicate that the prices in India are generally higher.

(d) Does not arise.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA : Sir, it is a very short and cryptic reply, not giving much information.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : It is his style and you must accept it !

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA : However, I would like to ask my first supplementary. Now, Sir, it is obvious that the only way we can cut down the foreign exchange being spent on the buying of petroleum products from abroad is to try to increase our own production thereby hoping that once we increase our own production, the prices, if they do not come down, at least will not continue to increase.

In this connection, I would like to say that there are some fields which, over the last few years, have been found and it was felt that these small fields might be uneconomical. But now it has been proved that they are economical and something like thirty million dollars can be saved if we can exploit them. So, I would like to know whether the Ministry is aware of this and, if so, what it has decided to do about it. Are they proposing to exploit these fields and, if they propose to do so, are they thinking of involving private entrepreneurs in collaboration with the ONGC ? I would like to know what they are really thinking to do to exploit them so that some foreign exchange can be saved.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Sir, if you look at the question, the question deals with the price increase vis-a-vis the growth in demand, whether we can contain the ever-growing demand of petroleum produets. That is what the main question is, whereas the hon. Member has just left his main field and got into the field of production from small oil-wells.

†सभा में प्रश्न सरदार जगजीत सिंह अरोड़ा द्वारा पूछा गया

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA : Is it not related ? If you produce more then the likelihood of the increase in prices will be less.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : I am answering this, though it has nothing to do with the main question. The hon. Member is interested to know about the production of oil, development of oil-fields. Sir, it is not only the question of developing small oil-fields, it is also the development of oil-fields which have the potential to produce more, and for that purpose we have opened up 72 blocks, both on-shore and off-shore, which has given us encouraging results and so many people have come forward for exploiting all these wells.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA : My question related to small oil-fields. Are you going to do anything about it ? Or are you going to put up 72 blocks in those fields in the other sector ? I am sorry I didn't get your answer about that.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : The development of oil-fields, both small and big, is contingent to 72 blocks.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA : I was hoping that I would get a categorical answer. Anyway, my second supplementary is that apart from small oil-fields, there are a number of areas which merit exploration. It appears that we have so far exploited only one-fifth of the area and four-fifths is yet to be exploited. Reading one of the papers I found that China today has 25,214 flowing oil-fields and India has managed to get 1858 or 1888—I forget what it is. Now, have we evolved a clear-cut policy of exploiting these potential areas within a time-frame ? Second point is, are you thinking of giving some chance to private entrepreneurs within the country ? Thank you.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Sir, I still say that the main question pertains to pricing and consumption. It has nothing to do with exploration and production. Even then, I am replying to the question.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA : But when you are not ready to give an answer about prices, what will we .... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : The hon Member should know that there is a lo of difference between price, consumption containing demand, production and al that.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA Can you control the consumption entirely You know that even with the increase i prices the consumption is still increasin And, therefore, we have to conside whether we are really exploiting our ow resources to the maximum—if not toda in the next few years we should be bette off and not spend so much forei exchange.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Th hon. Member is right. I do not say th you are perfectly right. (*Interruptions*)

Sir, I have said that we have opened 72 blocks for companies, both indigeno and foreign companies. This is what y want.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA I wanted to know : what are your futu plans for exploiting these areas ?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : This what I have said.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA Are you going to foreign companies exploiting this ? Have they come in su cient numbers ? Are you happy abo that ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is trying this. (*Interruptions*).

श्री सुरेश पचौरी : माननीय सभापति पेट्रोलियम प्रोडक्टस की डिमांड और सप्लाई गैप को देखें तो हम इस नतीजे पर पहुंचते कि प्रति वर्ष यह बढ़ रहा है और ऐसी संभा है कि 2000 वर्ष तक यह बढ़कर 20 मिलि टन से 40 मिलियन टन हो जाएगा । मैं इ माध्यम से सरकार से यह जानना चाहता हूं

कि इस गैप को कम करने के लिए सरकार की तरफ से क्या प्रयास किए जा रहे हैं ? हमारे यहां लगभग 1200 आईडिल वैल्स हैं जिसमें लगभग 60 परसेंट सदर्न रीजन में हैं। यदि इनका एक्सप्लायटेशन किया जाए तो इस कमी को पूरा किया जा सकता है। मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या सरकार इन आईडिल वैल्स के एक्सप्लायटेशन पर विचार कर रही है ताकि इस गैप को कम किया जा सके और पेट्रोलियम प्रोडक्ट्स की जो हमारे देश में कमी है, उसको दूर किया जा सके।

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Sir, we have been taking rectification measures to bring these idle and sick wells into production.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : Sir, the problem here is that the Minister is a master of evasiveness and he can say for half an hour without divulging anything. Regardless of that, I would draw his attention through you, Sir, to part (b) of the question which he is supposed to answer. This is about increase in consumption. And my question is related to that. And I would appreciate, Sir, if you could direct him to give a specific answer and not avoid with the skills in which he specialises. I want to know whether the consumption level of petroleum products is expected to be 77.7 million metric tonnes by 1994-95 as per the Planning Commission studies, and the shortfall by that time would be 17.7 million metric tonnes. If so, why has the Government not acted on specific commitments made by this hon. Minister and his colleague months back ? Why has the Government not acted ? I am asking a specific question about offering for utilisation of the existing discovered small and large fields to joint sector, other than the ONGC sector, which have been specifically committed by the hon. Minister. And I hope he has got the question. If you permit me, Sir, I am willing to repeat that so that he gets it clear. Why action has not been taken to meet this gap ? First, I have asked whether this gap of 17.7 million tonnes will be so by 1994-95, which would lead to an outgo of thousands of crores of rupees of foreign exchange. Secondly, the commitments made by this Government. In this very Ministry the decisions are held up for months together. Why is that decisions are not acted upon ? And it arises from part (b) and he cannot get away by saying that it does not arise from the question.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Sir, the hon. Member is a very knowledgeable person ....

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : I am in this matter certainly. I claim that.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : I am giving compliments to you.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : But now don't stop. Sir, in the last eight months, he has kept on giving compliments, for which I am grateful. He has kept on saying that I am right, these are valuable suggestions. But the result is zero action-wise.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Why do you resent compliments ? Do you resent compliments ?

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : I have accepted them with gratitude. But I want action.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Sir, may I for the benefit of the House and specially the hon. Member say that the Government have taken a decision in principle to offer medium-sized discovered fields for development in the joint sector ?

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : This was stated four months back. My question is why they have not acted upon those decisions.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : We are acting upon.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : Tell us what the action is. Sir, he is evading the answer. Please make him answer. What is the action ?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Offering oil fields for development does not overnight produce crude oil. We will have to call for the Companies, their offers. And only on the offers having come to the Government, we can take a decision.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : No, Sir. With the greatest respect I submit—I am saying with responsibility—that we are being misled in this House. I am saying this with all the responsibility at my command. He says, they have taken decisions in principle, they are acting upon. And yet not a single decision has been translated into action by offering particularly the small and medium fields which are ready, for which the ONGC has recommended since December, 1990. And yet the Government does not come out to say : 'All right; you take this field'. Have you taken action like that ? Will the Minister answer about the action taken and the result of it about somebody now being in a position to take up the fields and start working on it ? Has that stage been reached ? If not, why not ? And when do you propose to reach that stage ?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : The hon. Member is aware that we have called for international bids which is called fourth round of bidding and we have opened up oil wells for development. As I said earlier, 72 blocks have been offered and I am happy to say that 24 companies have come for these bids and these bids have been completed. Is it not action ? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : No, it is not action. .... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : I am speaking about the concrete action taken.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : By what time do you expect these oil wells to be in a position to start working and has any company been identified ?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : The Hon. Member knows the last date for receiving these bids was 15th April. It is just over.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : These are international bids. I am talking about small and medium fields for which the Minister announced months back that these would be offered either for the joint sector or to others, for which action has not yet been taken till today. I believe that someone is sitting on the files; I don't know who, or whether the Minister himself is sitting over them. Maybe, he likes to warm himself up. But it is summer now. I can understand it in winter that you sit on the files and warm yourself up. But in summer it is a bit too hot. It may be hot for you also to do that .... (*Interruptions*). You have not answered the question about small and medium oil fields. Sir, the Minister mentioned about 15th April. Does it relate to the bids for small and medium fields ? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Sir, he can say that files are pending but he cannot say the Minister sitting on the files. He cannot pass those remarks .... (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is not sitting on files; he is sitting on the chair. How can you talk about it ? He is not sitting on files; be reasonable. There is no file there. The whole House sees he is not sitting on any file.

श्री सुरेन्द्रजीत सिंह अहलूवालिया : सभापति जी, वीरेन जे० शाह खुद उद्योगपति हैं उनको फाइलों की मूवमेंट का अच्छी तरह से पता है।

डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : यह मिनिस्टर को प्रेसराइज करके कुछ चाहते हैं। (**व्यवधान**)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Irrespective of the merits of the comments made by Mr. Viren Shah, the fact remains that the hon. Minister has not answered the specific question in regard to the small and medium fields .... (*Interruptions*).

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : Sir, his remark is in bad taste.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : I am not making any comments on the comment of

Mr. Viren Shah. I am only drawing the attention of the House .... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : You should be a little fair to the Minister. You may not like to comment on the comment made by the hon. Member.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : The comments of Mr. Viren Shah will be judged on merits of the reply given by the Minister. The Minister has not so far referred to the action taken .... (*Interruptions*).

डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : मिनिस्टर से कुछ चाहते हैं। (**व्यवधान**)

SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI : You are nobody to comment.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : I would like to be heard ....

डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : क्या हर्ज किया जाए ? (**व्यवधान**) सदन का उपयोग इस काम के लिए किया जा रहा है। (**व्यवधान**)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : The Minister should give an answer in regard to the small and medium fields. I want the Minister to answer the question in regard to action taken.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He has given as much reply as he wanted.

डा० अबरार अहमद : माननीय सभापति महोदय, मुख्यतः प्रश्न पेट्रोलियम की खपत और मूल्य वृद्धि के संबंध में है और मंत्री महोदय ने अपने उत्तर में बताया है कि गत दस वर्षों में 1.2 से 8.2 तक कंजम्पशन में वृद्धि हुई है और आपने यह भी कहा है कि अगर उत्पादन में वृद्धि हो तो मूल्यों में कमी की जा सकती है। दूसरे शब्दों में यह कहा जा सकता है कि अगर कंजम्पशन में कमी की जाय तो मूल्यों में कमी की जा सकती है। ऐसी स्थिति में मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि कंजम्पशन में कमी करने के लिए आप क्या प्रयास कर रहे हैं ? क्या आपकी जानकारी में है कि 1989 में एक मोटर वीहकल एक्ट पास किया गया था और उस मोटर व्हीकल एक्ट के पास होने के कारण जो ट्रक 15-20 टन माल लेकर चलते थे उनकी क्षमता 9 टन सीमित कर दी गई जिसके कारण 10 से 20 प्रतिशत डीजल का कंजम्पशन बढ़ा और लगभग 5 प्रतिशत मूल्यों में वृद्धि हुई और विदेशी मुद्रा का काफी अधिक भार हमारे ऊपर पड़ा ? इसलिए क्या माननीय मंत्री जी इस प्रकार के मोटर व्हीकल एक्ट को बदल कर पुनः एक ट्रक के भार की क्षमता लगभग उठाने 15 टन के आसपास कराने के लिए दूसरे मंत्री जी से और प्रधान मंत्री जी से बात करेंगे जिससे विदेशी मुद्रा का जो भार हमारे ऊपर पड़ता है और यह जो अनायास डीजल का कंजम्पशन बढ़ गया है उसमें कमी हो सके ?

श्री सभापति : प्रश्नकर्ता को मालूम है कि it does not concern the Petroleum Ministry. He only wants you to talk to the Minister of Surface Transport.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : It is a really a very important question. It is very relevant as far as conservation ....

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is very relevant. But are you going to answer it ? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : My answer is, it is a very good suggestion for action. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN : Sir, this is a very important issue. The Minister has not replied properly. I do not know whether he is aware of the working of his Ministry, or, he is purposely evasive. It is a fact that the prices of petroleum products have been rising continuously, putting a heavy burden on the consumer, on the common man. It is because of the shortfall in production that we have been importing huge quantity of crude oil and other petroleum products. Every time, we go on increasing the prices, irrespective of the fact whether the international prices have increased or fallen.

The point is, there are numerous reports. We have also the opinion of eminent geologists that we have many potential sources for increasing the indigenous production, in Gujarat, in Bengal, and in other places. This potential has not been properly harnessed. One Mr. K. C. Roy Choudhury, a very eminent geologist and an ex-officer of the Geological Survey of India, has said that he himself had explored for oil in Gujarat, in Bengal, but the Government had not taken it up seriously. There are many potential sources. There are many reports on this. I would like to know what the Government is doing to harness the indigenous sources, or, is the Government more inclined to import. Does it mean somebody in the Ministry benefits by importing ?

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN : Sir, he cannot cast aspersions like this. He cannot attribute motives. (*Interruptions*). It is not right on the part of the hon. Member. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is often done in Parliament.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN : I would like to know specifically what the Government has done to explore indigenous sources, so that production can be increased. The production has been falling for the last few years, but the Government is banking more on the multinationals. They have thrown the field open to the multinationals in terms of joint ventures and other things. Therefore, I would like to know what the Government is doing towards increasing the indigenous production, particularly, in Gujarat and Bengal.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Sir, I must say that the Member is more concerned about production. He has made an allegation that we have not done anything to increase the production in Gujarat, Bengal, and other areas. Time and again, this has been discussed in this House. I think, a dozen times, this has been discussed. We have said that we have been taking steps to develop oil fields, taking basin surveys, seismic surveys. We have invested enough to find oil, not only in Gujarat and Bengal, but elsewhere in the country also. If he wants details, I need notice.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN : No reply again. One Mr. Roy Choudhury made one specific suggestion about West Bengal Canal basin. What about his report ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is trying to explore everywhere. He has found even in Rajasthan.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : I have said in this very House time and again that the projections made in K. C. Roy Choudhury's report are baseless, not founded on scientific investigations.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : Sir, the raw material for manufacture of fertilizers is transported from oil fields which are sometimes one thousand or even two thousand kilometres away. A lot of expenditure is involved in this. I am more concerned about the price of gas and naphtha which has risen from Rs. 20 to Rs. 220 per cubic metre, which is a tremendous rise. These petroleum products are used for fertilizer and other agricultural products and, therefore, the farmers have to pay a subsidy of about Rs. 6000 crores or something like that.

May I know whether the prices of raw material which is used for manufacture of fertilizer and agricultural products can be fixed in such a way that there is no price rise in future ? Will the Government take some steps in this direction ?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Sir, Naphtha, fuel oil and LSHD are the products mainly used for fertilizer. The subsidy given for Naphtha is Rs. 618 crores, for fuel oil Rs. 196 crores and for LSHD Rs. 226 crores. The total amount comes to Rs. 1034 crores. This is the subsidy enjoyed by people who are using fertilizer. The hon. Member should know that we have already given these things at subsidised rate for manufacture of fertilizer.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He wants to know whether you will keep the prices stable.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : I am asking about the price rise per cubic metre of gas and naphtha during the last 10 years. What is the price rise ?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : I will give the exact fiugres. The price rise of naphtha was there in 1984-85. Then in 1990-91 it was Rs. 803 and this year it is Rs. 401.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have again raised it.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Yes. Regarding fuel oil, the price was raised in 1981, then in 1984-85 and again in 1990-91. I can give the figures of these products to the hon. Member.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : There has been much more rise. I want to know, what is the price rise so that the people can know ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : He can only talk about the raw material.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : These products are for the manufacture of fertilizers. *(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is trying to keep them as low as possible.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : I want to seek your protection. This information is not correct. There is a lot of exploitation.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is giving specific answer relating to the specific price rise. What else do you require ?

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV : He has given the figures of the price rise of naphtha, not of gas.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : I do not have figures about gas.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He requires notice for that.

SHRIMATI MIRA DAS : Sir, how many oil fields are so far exploited and has the Government made any plans to make them more viable for useful purposes of life ? And what is the target in the Eighth Plan ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Do you want to know the oil production target ?

SHRIMATI MIRA DAS : How many oil fields are explored ?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : How many oil fields have been prospected ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Do you want to know about prospecting ?

SHRIMATI MIRA DAS : Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN : How many oil fields have been prospected and have been found productive ? Is that your question ?

SHRIMATI MIRA DAS : Yes, Sir. .. *(Interruptions)*. ....

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Sir, as I said earlier, the oil fields are to be developed, and for their development seismic and other geological survey also has to take place. Having done that, I have already said, 72 blocks have already been found to be offered to the companies for exploitation.

असम में उग्रवादी गतिविधियों में विदेशी हाथ

*42. डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : क्या गृह मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या असम के मुख्यमंत्री ने केन्द्र सरकार का ध्यान इस तथ्य की ओर दिलाया है कि असम में उग्रवादी गतिविधियों को बढ़ावा देने में पाकिस्तान तथा बंगलादेश का हाथ है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस मामले में सरकार की क्या प्रतिक्रिया है ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE